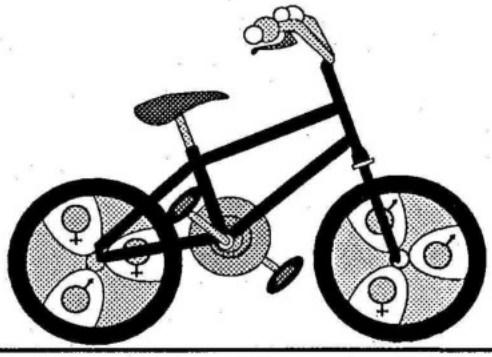


OBN NEWS

May 1991

OBN News, 519 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9 Tel: (416)-649-1356 / Fax: (416)-649-1314

The Ontario Bisexual Network (OBN) is a group formed to enable contacts among bisexual people in Ontario, and to help them undertake activities of interest. At present, these activities include: a mailing list, a newsletter, support group meetings, social activities, a political action group, education of others, information sharing, and safe sexuality information. The network's only mandate is to bring people together. — OBN Meeting, August 2, 1990.

April 18th Meeting Addresses AIDS Education

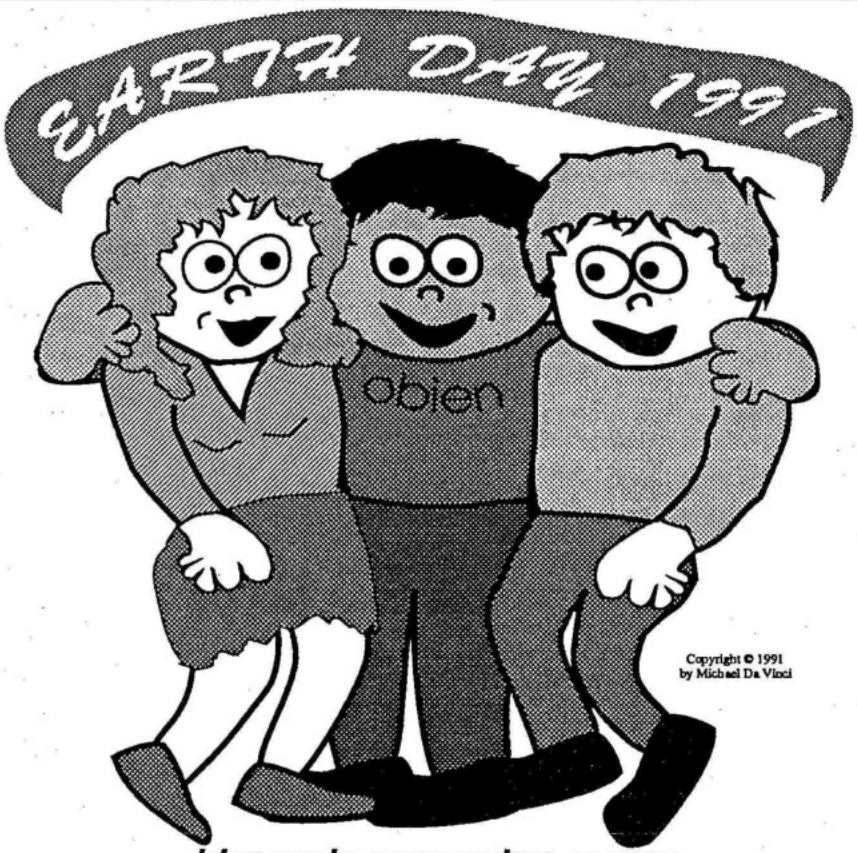
Even though attendance was low at our April 18th meeting, there was a lively discussion about AIDS education and particularly about reaching women in Ontario about safer sex.

We considered at least three dimensions of the problem of stopping the spread of AIDS. For one, there is still widespread oppression of women in our society, and some women who take the initiative towards safer sex with their male partners could face the possibility of domestic violence and/or lack of co-operation by their partners.

The second issue is that of secrecy and closeting. We know for a fact that there are many married or 'coupled' people who are sexually active outside their marriages or partnerships, and who have not disclosed their activities to their primary partners. Some of these people are lesbian, bisexual or gay, and are also not 'out' to their primary partners about their sexual orientation. Even though the partner who is sexually active outside the marriage or partnership may be practising what he or she considers 'safer' sex, he or she may not want to risk the partnership by disclosing either his or her orientation or sexual activities.

Finally, our society has not fully faced the fact that many people are non-monogamous. Many people seem to have even more difficulty understanding non-monogamy as a viable option, than they do homosexuality and bisexuality.

It was suggested that bisexuals ally with other community agencies to create literature that would be addressed to both men and women, about the above issues, safer sex, and AIDS.



... bisexuals conserving energy ...

OBN Meeting Times

OBN Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., and on the third Thursday of every month from 8 to 10 p.m., at the 519 Community Center (519 Church Street, just north of Wellesley). To add your name to our mailing list write to OBN at the address above.

Who to Contact

The following is a list of OBN members who have volunteered their time to talk with you about questions you may have, or if you just need someone for emotional support:

Bill Jeffery 922-4262
Bruce Small 649-1356
Carol Broderick 766-7011
Catherine Crockett 537-5832
Les Green 968-6955
Rob Cusson 362-9892
Scott Lucas 633-5666

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CANADIAN GAY ARCHIVES

Violence Against Lesbians and Gays

Harvey Brownstone, Chair of the Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues within the Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations, has written to the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities of Toronto seeking help.

He is looking for a core group of individuals from the Lesbian and Gay Community in Toronto to serve as members of this very important sub-committee.

In November 1990, Toronto City Council endorsed the establishment of the sub-committee to address the recommendations of the Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations regarding the problem of violence against Lesbians and Gays in Toronto. In addition to devising a comprehensive strategy to address violence, the sub-committee will also address the following issues as part of its mandate:

- lesbian and gay community police relations
- spousal benefits
- discriminatory treatment
- employment equity/affirmative action

An introductory meeting will be held on May 16th, 1991 at 7:30 pm in the East Room of the 519 Church Street Community Centre. At that meeting the preliminary mandate and structure of the subcommittee will be discussed, and application forms will be available for persons wishing to be members of the subcommittee.

For more information call Janice Dembo or Denise Carr at 392-7837.

(Editor's note: This looks like an ideal opportunity not only for meaningful involvement in community affairs, but for furthering the understanding that bisexuality also exists in Toronto.)

PRIDE DAY

The Official Pride Day registration kit has arrived and we desperately need a co-ordinator to emerge from the group and supervise the details from now to June 30th, the big day itself. Many volunteers are needed to help either on the OBN table or with the whole event, including the parade. This year we have a large rainbow flag to wave in addition to the OBN banner.

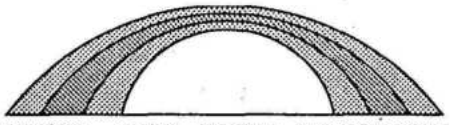
1st International Bisexual Conference

The 1st International Bisexual Conference will take place in Amsterdam, Holland, on October 4th and 5th, 1991 at the Vrije University. It is being organized by eleven Dutch Bisexual organizations.

If anyone is interested in giving a talk or a workshop at the conference they are invited to contact Fritz Klein as soon as possible so that you can be put on the program. Write to: Fritz Klein, M.D., Foreign Committee Chairman, 1st I.B.C. Coordination Group, Postbus 1406, 1000 BK Amsterdam, Holland; you may also telephone (31 20)-627-7445 or fax (31 20)-548-7502.

"Pass-The Hat" Policy

To keep the treasury viable, we have begun a "pass-the-hat" policy for all regular OBN meetings. Members will be expected to toss in up to $2 each to cover expenses including newsletters.



VIGIL ON THE BRIDGE

Should anyone create a "Bisexual Movement"?

Creating such a movement, isn't it assuming the mandate to diminish the scope of the phenomenon?

Could the idea of a movement in itself confine the bisexual action in time?

Is anything restricted from the movement doomed to inertia, stagnation?

How can this movement be liberating and for whom?

What that is new and original will this movement bring: a logo, manifestations, stars, martyrs, posters, literature, some victories, some failures, beautiful love stories coming out into the air, shy souls and endangered bodies hung in the closet?

Feel free to forward your answer(s) to any questions appearing in VIGIL ON THE BRIDGE to the OBN News, c/o Leo Beaulieu.

Special Concert for Toronto Gay Men's Chorus

Mark the night of June 29th, 1991 on your calendar! The Toronto Gay Men's Chorus will be performing in "SING!", a special concert with other gay groups from Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. Held in conjunction with this year's Lesbian and Gay Pride Day celebrations, the focus of the evening will be to honour members of Toronto City Council who voted to officially proclaim June 30th as "Pride Day".

New Human Rights Legislation

Federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell has recently confirmed that she will in the near future be introducing a package of amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA), the first amendments since the law took effect in 1978.

Svend Robinson, M.P. for Burnaby-Kinsgway, B.C., is urging the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities to write to their Member of Parliament, the Minister of Justice, and the Prime Minister, to ensure that this package will include the long overdue amendment to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Ontario, Manitoba and the Yukon Territory have joined Quebec in prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation within their jurisdictions. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service now have policies of non-discrimination. The Federal Court held recently that Section 15 of the Charter of Rights prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. The same court, however, ruled in the Mossop decision that our relationships will be given no legal recognition as families unless the Act is amended to include sexual orientation.

*To get postcards and petitions, phone Svend's office at (613)-996-5597 or write to: Svend Robinson, MP, 386 Confederation Building, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Postage is **free** when writing to MPs.*